

Knowing God

By Henry Mahan

Bible Text: Philippians 3:6-10

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If you will, turn with me in your Bibles to the book of Philippians. I am reading from Philippians chapter three beginning with verse eight. My subject tonight is “Knowing God, Knowing God.”

Philippians three verse eight says, “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him.”

Now here is a verse I picked out of Job 22. I want you to look over there with me, Job chapter 22. Paul says, “That I may know him. I count everything but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ my Lord.” Here in Job 22 one of the friends of Job made this statement, chapter 22 verse 21, whether or not he spake the things of God as he ought to I do not know, but this is a good statement. “Acquaint now thyself with him. Acquaint now thyself with him.” That is speaking of our Lord. “And be at peace. Thereby good shall come unto thee. Acquaint now thyself with him.”

Now Jeremiah nine, the ninth chapter of Jeremiah verse 23 and 24. Jeremiah 9:23, “Thus saith the Lord, ‘Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom neither let the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches.’” Man is going to have something to glory in. He is going to find something to glory in. But he says, verse 24, “Let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me.” That is the thing in which we can glory, that we know him, that we know him, that “I am the Lord which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth for in these things I delight saith the Lord.”

Now John 17, another verse, John 17 verse three and you recognize immediately this is the priestly prayer of our master in which he prayed for those whom the Father had given him. In John 17 verse three our Lord said, “And this is life eternal that they might know thee.” “Oh that I may know him.” “Acquaint now thyself with him.” “If any many glory let him glory in this that he knows me.”

And here our master said, “This is life eternal that they might know thee, that they might know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

My friends, a spiritual—that is, a heart knowledge, not a theological knowledge, not a head knowledge, but a spiritual heart, scriptural and saving knowledge of God is the greatest need of every person here, a scriptural, spiritual saving knowledge of God is the greatest need of every person here. An unknown God can neither be worshipped, you cannot worship an unknown God. An unknown God cannot be trusted. An unknown God cannot be believed. This is what Paul said when he gave that great definition of faith. He said, “I know whom I have believed. I know whom I have believed. I am persuaded he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him, but I know him. I know him. I know whom I have believed.”

Christ brought this charge against the Pharisees, the religious leaders of his day. He said, “You neither know me nor my Father. You don’t know me and you don’t know my Father.” And he said to the woman at the well, listen to him, “If you knew, if you knew the gift of God, if you knew who was speaking to you, if you knew you would ask of me and I would give you living water, if you knew, if you knew.”

Now, is there a God? Turn to Psalm 19. Is there a God? There are two ways that God and his existence may be known. There are two ways that we can come to some understanding of the fact that there is a God. And that is the creation and the Scriptures. In Psalm 19 it says, “The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” And you are familiar with that Scripture.

And then verse seven says, “The law of the Lord,” that is the Word of God, “is perfect converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure making wise the simple.” There is a God. God reigns. The heavens tell us that. We have the revelation of creation. God is seen and God is perceived, his eternal power and godhead in the things that are made. And then the Scriptures declare the character of God almighty.

But how does a man...? I need more than that. I want to go one step further than that. I want to go one step further tonight than just knowing there is a God. The heavens declare the glory of God. The Scriptures reveal there is a God, but I want to go one step further than that and ask this question: But how does a man in his heart spiritually and scripturally and savingly, how does a man in his heart actually know, not know about, now, but know, not hear about or read about or be mentally aware of or accept mental facts about, but how does a man actually spiritually and scripturally and savingly, how does he actually come to know the living God?

And the answer is two fold. One answer was given by our master. The disciples said, “Show us the Father. Show us God.”

And Christ said, “He that has seen me hath seen the Father.” God is revealed in Christ.

“No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal him.”

I am not talking just about the doctrines of Christ, now. I am talking about the person of Christ. A man knows God in Christ and then, secondly, it is twofold because you cannot separate the incarnate Word from the written Word. You cannot separate the living Word from the written Word. God is revealed in Christ and God is revealed in his Word, in his Word.

Now Luther once said to the great writer Erasmus, the great scholar, they say. I know little about him. But Luther said this to him. He said, "Erasmus, your thoughts of God are too human. Your thoughts of God are too human."

And I bring this charge against the preachers and religionists of our day. Their thoughts of God are too human.

Let's look at Psalm chapter 50, the 50th Psalm. I am saying the same thing that Luther said to this man, Erasmus, he said, "Your thoughts of God are wrong. Your thoughts of God are too human. Your thoughts of God are far below what your thoughts of God ought to be."

And this is what our Lord is saying in Psalm 50 verse 21. "These things has thou done and I kept silent. Thou thoughtest, thou thoughtest, your thoughts of me, your opinion of me, thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as yourself. Your thoughts of God are too human."

I don't want to know the popular god .I don't want to know the god, particularly, of this generation. I want to know the God to whom the Scriptures refer, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Creator of this world, the living God, the one David was talking about when he said, "My soul panteth for the living God," the one of whom our master spoke when he said, "Eternal life is to know the living God, the true God."

Now, my friends, the God of 1983—and I am sure that the scholar Erasmus got provoked at Mr. Luther for bringing this charge against him. That is a serious charge. "Your thoughts of God are too human. Your thoughts of God are too human." But I bring this charge against the religionists of 1983. I am saying that the god of this year resembles the sovereign supreme Lord and God of heaven and earth. It resembles him no more than a flickering candle resembles the glory of the noonday sun. That is about as close as this god comes to being like the God of the Bible.

That's why...I know that's a serious charge. I am saying that the god of 1983 no more resembles the sovereign, supreme Lord of heaven and earth than a flickering candle resembles the a glowing noon day sun, no closer.

Now listen to me. Today's god is moved by sentiment, emotion and impulse. That is the way today's God operates. That is the way he moves. He is moved by sentiment. He is moved by emotion. He is moved by impulse.

The living God of heaven and earth acts according to justice and the principles of righteousness and holiness. That is how he acts. The god of this day is moved by sentiment. The God of the Bible acts on principle, justice, righteousness and sovereignty.

Turn to Psalm 89, Psalm 89. He will not even redeem a sinner without his justice being satisfied, his righteousness being exalted. In Psalm 89 listen to verse 14. It says, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Justice and judgment, mercy and truth shall go before they face, but justice and judgment are the habitations of his throne."

Don't you think this is true? Today's god has a will. He wills to do things. They say this. They say, "God wills to do this. God wants to do that." But his will, the will of the god of this day is defeated not only by men, but by Satan." He desires but he can't accomplish it. He wills, but he can't perform it.

The living God, the Scripture says, "Worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. He does according to his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth."

Turn to Isaiah chapter 46. It is a different god. The god of this day no more resembles the God of heaven than a candle resembles the noon day sun. Listen to Isaiah 46 verse nine. This is the God of the Bible speaking, the God of creation. He said, "Remember the former things of old. I am God. There is none else. I am God. There is none like me. I declare the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things that are not yet done saying my counsel shall stand. I will do all my pleasure. Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country, yea I have spoken it. I will also bring it to pass. I purposed it. I will also do it."

That is the God of the Bible.

Today's god waits on the creature. I have heard preachers say so often I have read this, "God is waiting on you to do something. God is waiting on you to do something."

And yet the Scripture says that men are to wait on the Lord. In Psalm 27:14 it says, "Wait on the Lord, again I say, wait on the Lord." The Lord is not waiting on you. You wait on him. There is a difference.

Today's Jesus—I am not going to call him the Christ because he is not the Christ. Today's Jesus is another Jesus. Today's Jesus offers, offers eternal life to as many as will let him save them. The Christ of the Bible gives eternal life to as many as the Father gave him.

And you know that is so. Listen to Romans chapter nine. Turn over to the ninth chapter of Romans.

Today's Jesus offers salvation to as many as will let him save them. The Christ of the Bible gives eternal life. It says, "He hath given us eternal life." Eternal life is a gift of

God. In Romans nine listen to this, verse 11, talking about the children of Rebekah. It says, “Even when they were not yet born neither having done any good or evil that the purpose of God according election might stand not of him that works, but of him that calls. It was said to her, ‘The elder shall serve the younger.’ As it is written, ‘Jacob have I loved. Esau have I hated.’ Now what shall we say to these things? Is there unrighteousness in God? God forbid. He said, ‘I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him that willeth. It is not of him that runneth. It is of God that showeth mercy. God shows mercy.”

“For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God.”

Listen to this. Today’s god—you hear this all the time—has a wonderful plan for your life if you will just fulfill the necessary requirements and conditions. But the Scripture says, “The living God worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure.”

Turn back to Romans eight, the Scripture I quoted a while ago in the prayer. “And we know that all things—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—all things—past, present and present—all things—good and bad—all things—big and little—all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”

Today’s god has provided a remedy for sin. He has provided a remedy for sin. And that remedy for sin will work. It will work if the sinner will only cooperate with god. But the Scripture tells us that the living God has provided a perfect righteousness and an effectual atonement through the obedience, the death of his Son for all his elect. That is what the Scripture says about the living God.

So I bring this charge, that the god of 1983, of the average pulpit and the average religionist and the average church no more resembles this independent, almighty, supreme, sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, living God of creation and election and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the god of today no more resembles him than a flickering candle resembles the noon day sun. And I am saying this to you. There is no possible alternative between a sovereign, omnipotent, supreme God who does as he pleases when he pleases with whom he pleases, there is no possible alternative between that God and no God at all.

Now will you think about that? I am saying that there is no possible alternative. He is either God in every respect of the Word and every aspect of the Word or there is no God at all.

That is what David saying. Turn to Psalm 115. You can’t have a God who is frustrated. He is not God. You can’t have a God who is defeated. He is not God. You can’t have a God who wills and can’t accomplish it. He is not God. If there is any power that can withstand him or any power that can resist him or any power that can change him, he is not God. That power is God.

In Psalm 115 verse two, “Wherefore should the heathen say, ‘Where is now their God?’” David said, “Our God is in the heavens. He hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.”

Turn to Psalm 135. Psalm 136 says practically the same thing. Verse five of Psalm 135. “For I know that the Lord is great, that our Lord is above all images, all ideas of god, all idols. The Lord our God is above all idols and false gods because whatsoever the Lord pleased that did he in heaven and earth and the seas and in all deep places. There is no alternative.” Your god is either a sovereign, supreme, almighty God or there is no God. You worship an idol. You worship an image. You worship a figment of your imagination. He is not God.

Turn to Daniel chapter four. Let’s look at this, Daniel the fourth chapter. These things are so vital that I am trying to say. They are so vital. Your god...He said, “Your thoughts of God are too human.”

My friend, let us be accused of going to seed on sovereignty. Let us be accused of overemphasizing the grace of God. But never let it be said that we make God less than he is. Never let it be said that we make God less than he is. Let’s have wrong thoughts of ourselves and let’s have wrong thoughts of our possibilities and let’s have wrong thoughts of what we will, but let’s don’t tamper with the character of God. Let God be God and every man a liar. That is what Scripture says.

And what I am trying to enforce upon you is that today’s god is not God. He is no God at all. This god is no God at all. There is no middle ground between and infinite, unchangeable, all wise, all knowing, all powerful eternal supreme God and no God at all. You have got to from one extreme to the other.

In Daniel four listen to this, verse 34. “At the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes to heaven and mine understanding returned to me and I blessed the most high and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, his eternity, whose dominion is an eternal dominion, his kingdom is from generation to generation and all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, as nothing, as nonexistent. And he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of this earth and none can stay his hand and none can say unto him, ‘What are you doing? Give an account of your works.’ He won’t do it.”

A god who has to give an account of anything that he thinks or purposes or does to his creatures is no God. He is no God. You have got an idol. You don’t have a God. You have an idol. He is absolutely sovereign in creation, in providence and in salvation.

Now listen to this. I picked this up the other day. A “god,” a god whose will—whatever that will may be, whether it be the salvation of some men or all men or nobody, a god whose will can be successfully resisted, a god whose designs can be defeated or frustrated, a god whose purposes and counsel depend in any way, in any way on the help or cooperation of any creature has no claim to deity. Now you think about it. He has no claim to deity. He is not God. Instead of being an object of your worship he merits

nothing but your contempt. That's right. That's what I am saying. He is either God, the Augustinian, Pauline, Calvinistic, Lutheran God of all power and man nothing you have got no God at all, no God at all. Your god is not worthy of worship. He is not worthy of the time of day. He is not worthy of anything but utter contempt. That's what I think about it. That's what I think about it.

No wonder the world laughs at religion. No wonder the world mocks and laughs at the God of modern religion. He is a figment of man's imagination. He wasn't born of the Word, he was born out of their own evil hearts. That's where they got him. He can only do what they let him do. He waits around on their minds to be made up. He is the invention of foolish men's minds.

Now, brethren, think about it. I am saying three or four things that to me are vital and essential and are foundation on which we rest. You know God in Christ through the Word. And I want to know the living God, not a god, not a god, because I believe that the god of this day, the god of modern religion, this doesn't even resemble god. They don't even talk like he is god. They don't even use his name with any reverence or awe. There is no fear of God before their eyes. They fear men, but not God.

Charles Spurgeon said this. "There is nothing, nothing more comforting to a believer than God's immutable absolute sovereignty, nothing." Under the most adverse circumstances, under the most severe trials we believe that God has ordained even our afflictions and that God overrules them and that God will sanctify them for his glory and for our good. And there is nothing for which a believer ought to contend more earnestly and dogmatically than the truth of God's sovereignty over all things and over all creatures. The throne of God and his right to sit upon it is what we believe. We proclaim an enthroned God. We proclaim his right to do as he wills with his own and to dispose of his creatures as he thinks best without consulting them in the matter at all. He is God on the throne I worship, God on the throne I trust and God on the throne I preach.

That's what made old Queen Mary say she feared the prayers of John Knox more than she feared the armies of England because he believed God, he believed God.

Let me take in the next few minutes just a few of God's glorious attributes and comment briefly. Turn, first of all, to Genesis one. And I am confident of this. You cannot, we cannot, I cannot give him too much glory. It is absolutely utterly impossible for the heart of a man or the mind of a man or the tongue of man to exalt God too highly or to put man too low. That is an impossibility. Don't ever be afraid of that. You will never give him too much glory. I tell you the charge brought against us is not that we give him too much credit and too much praise and too much glory. We give him too little. That is the charge brought against us.

But it says here in Genesis one verse one, "In the beginning God...In the beginning God." Let's look at his eternity. "In the beginning God." What is this saying? It is saying this. Now listen. In the beginning God. Now I can't handle this too well, but there was a time, if the word time can be used. I doubt that the word time can be used. There was space,

there was a time—for the sake of a word—when God, this God of glory, this God of the universe, this God and Father of Christ, there was a time in the unity of his triune person and nature dwelt alone. There was a time when God dwelt alone.

Do you believe that? It has to be because from him all things came. By him and through him all things consist. Everything that was made was made by him so there was a time when he in his triune person—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—existed and dwelt alone. There was no heaven where his glory was manifested. There was no earth to engage his attentions. There were no angels to sing his praise. There was no universe to be upheld by his power. There was no sun to shine in his universe. There was no moon or stars, there was God. I just can't handle that. I can't either. But it is so. There was God. In the beginning God. No earth, no moon, stars, no sun, no angels, no devils, no demons. There was God from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. Isn't that what Scripture says? Thou art God. God was self contained, self sufficient and self satisfied. He needed nothing and no one. Is that right? It has to be because he is God. He is God.

His essential glory cannot be added to nor diminished by anything you say, do or are or anything. Is that right? It has to be right. God. If he needed a world to make him complete he is not God. If he needed an angel to add to his glory he is not God. If he needed a universe to govern he is not God. But the Scripture says, "In the beginning," not half a god or a third or a god or a quarter of a god or almost... He said, "In the beginning God."

And, brother, God's spake and said, "Let there be light," for his own purpose, for his wisdom. Light because almighty God spake it into existence. And he spake a man into existence, made him out of the clay and put his breath of life in him. And that creature has got nothing to say about the way he is made, when he was made, how he was made or what he was made for. God made him. "In the beginning God."

Whatever he wills...that's what Scripture says. Turn to Colossians one. This is what I am saying. Oh, I am saying this. You can't...old Scott called me the other day and said, "Henry, here is that message for you."

I said, "Shoot, go ahead."

He said, "Well, I just got one sentence. You'll have to work up the message."

I said, "All right. Let's have it."

He said, "God won't take no for an answer. God won't take no for an answer."

Think about it a little bit. God won't take no for an answer. He is God. He is God.

Colossians chapter one says, "By him," verse 16, "By him were all things, even the thoughts going through your mind right now. By him were all things created, all things whether in heaven, whether on earth, whether visible or invisible, whether they are

thrones or dominions, whether they are principalities or powers, whether they are in heaven, earth or hell, whether they are in the mind of men or the mind of Satan, all things were created by him and for him and for him. And he is before all things.” He was before your rebellion. He was before your submission. “And by him all things consist.”

You take the next breath enabled by God. You take the next breath by the mercy of God. I guarantee it. You are in his hands. That’s just it. That’s God’s eternity. In the beginning God. In the beginning God.

All right. What about his counsel? Let’s turn to Acts 15. When you use the word “counsel” what are you talking about? Well, let’s put it in these words. His counsel is his will. His counsel is his purpose. His counsel is his design. His counsel is his decree. And his counsel has reference to everything from the time in the beginning God, his counsel or will or purpose has to do with everything from that point on, everything from that point on.

Does that makes sense? That is where [?] go the person of God, his eternity, his independence. He is self contained, self sufficient. Our God is God. Nothing can be added to him.

So his will, whatever he wills, whatever he purposed, whatever he has in his divine counsel and decree decided would be done in the way that it would be done, from that moment on everything that was made, everything that was brought into existence, everything that was decreed or permitted is his counsel. [?] this counsel could it be. He is the counselor.

All right. Look at Acts 15 now verse 18. “So known unto God are all his works.” What are his works? Everything that is working he is working. Everything that is working, everything that is existing. “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning.”

“In the beginning God,” and from that point every thing he wills or intended or decided or purposed to do was done. It was done in the mind and will of God. It was done. He never learned anything after that. He never forgot anything. That’s just so. Good and evil, great and small, angels and men, life and death, everything works according to his will. There is not a grain of sand that is not well known to God. There is not a hair on your head that isn’t number. There isn’t a sparrow that falls to the ground without your heavenly Father. He is as much sovereign over the movement of an angel wing as he is the wing of a fly. That’s right. He is as much sovereign over the raise of the sun as the glimmer of a glow worm out there in the forest. That little glow word worm that just pops its light, God is just as sovereign over that as he is that bright ultraviolet ray that comes from that noon day sun. That’s God, a royal inventory. He says, “I number the hairs of your head.”

In Ephesians...

You say, “You are getting God too big.”

Ain't no way. Now that's some thing I am not afraid of. I tell you what I am afraid of. I am scared to death I am not going to preach him big enough.

Ephesians 1:5. "He predestinated us to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ himself according to the good pleasure of whose will? His will." Now we can... you can run around here arguing all day about man's will and God's will and free will and all the different wills, but, my friend, it will all come down to this. His will shall be done. I don't know what it is, I just know it is going to be done.

Look at verse 11, "In whom also," Ephesians 1:11, "we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things, all things in heaven, earth and hell after the counsel of his own will." He said, "I purposed it and I will do it. I have decreed it and I will bring it to pass."

Now his counsel is eternal. He said he hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation. His counsel is wise. I used to hear brother Barnard say, "The Lord will save all whom he can wisely save." I know what he was saying.

Turn to Psalm 104 and let's see if we can get some help. Psalm 104. The Lord will save all whom he can wisely save. Psalm 104 verse 24. Listen to this. "Oh Lord, how manifold are thy works in wisdom, in wisdom." That's how he made them all. We are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus.

Do you see what I am saying, Bob? He is not just talking here...when he is talking about the works of God our minds go to the trees and the flowers and the earth and all. But his work, his greatest work is the redemption of his people. "In wisdom hast thou made them all. The earth is full of thy riches. The kingdom of Christ is full of thy riches. He is going to show eternity the riches of his grace in us, the riches of his grace in us. His counsel is wise."

Proverbs 3:19. Let's see if this will help. That was a reference in our center reference there, Proverbs 3:19. "The Lord by wisdom hath founded the earth, by understanding hath he established the heavens."

Are you with me? I tell you this. I talked about God in whose eyes everything is naked and open, with whom...he is the one with whom we have to do. Now here is the thing. Somebody said to brother Barnard one time, "Well, that God is a monster." Then he said, "Get ready to face a monster," because this is that God.

Call him what you want to. He goes by a lot of names. His people call him beloved. Saints of God call him precious. To them he is precious. To you he is a monster. That doesn't matter. That doesn't matter. Call him what you want to, but one day you will say he is Lord.

Everything in heaven, earth and hell is going to bow the knee and with the tongue confess that he is Lord. Call him what you want to now, but he is God. I am reading from his Word. And the only way you can know him is through his Son and his Word.

His counsel is free. It is unconditional. It is not of him that willeth. It is not of him that runneth. It is of God that showeth mercy. His counsel is unchangeable.

Turn to Malachi three. I am saying, "In the beginning God." God. And everything from that point, everything that is done and decreed and designed is his counsel and his will and he knows it. And he is not going to change. He said in Malachi 3:6, "I am the Lord. I change not."

I know we love these little clichés. "Prayer changes things." Well, I don't have a great deal of argument with that just so God is not included under things. It doesn't matter to me what you put under things. Prayer changes things. Put any thing you want to under it. Don't put God under it because he doesn't change.

A prayer may change you. It may change your attitude. God may use it as a means or an instrument to bring to pass a great work, whatever you say, but prayer doesn't change God. Nothing changes God. He said, "I am the Lord. I change not." The gifts and calling of God are with out change. It is unchangeable, his counsel.

All right, the third thing now. His knowledge. Here is a verse I just tried to quote, Hebrews 4:13. Now stay with me. I want it understood loud and clear. I would like to have the ear of the whole nation right now. This is what I believe about God. This is what I believe Scripture teaches about God. I believe that today's generation doesn't know the living God. I am not saying that we do, but I sure want to. I sure want to.

And these things I know about him: his eternity, "In the beginning God;" the unchangeableness, the wisdom, the freeness and the glory of his counsel, his will. It is going to be done.

Now his knowledge, Hebrews 4:13. Hebrews 4:13. "Neither is there any creature, any creature," that's cherubim, and angels and demons and devils and men and dead and living, any creature, that is the...that is not manifest in his sight. All things are naked, naked, bare, nude, open, open, revealed under the eyes of him with whom we have to do. There is not a word in my mouth Lord that thou dost not know it altogether."

It is not just the Word he knows. He knows the meaning of it. He knows the motive of it. He knows the aim of it. He knows the direction of it. He knows the intent of it. Not a word in my mouth God doesn't now altogether.

I'll tell you that is something. God is omniscient. God is omniscient. He knows everything: past, present and future. David said, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me."

Turn to Psalm 139. This is so vital. Stay with me patiently, will you? Psalm 139. Psalm 139. I worked on this. It is worthy of your consideration. Verse two. "Lord, you know my down sitting. You know my uprising." Verse one. Let's go to verse one, Psalm 139. "Oh, Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. You know my down sitting, my uprising. You understand my thoughts afar off. Thou compasseth my path. My lying down, are acquainted with all my ways. There is not a word in my tongue, not a word, but, oh Lord, thou knowest it altogether. That hast beset me behind and before and laid your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. I can't attain unto it. Whither shall I flee from your presence? Where shall I go from you? Ascend into heaven, you are there. If I make my bed in hell you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea even there shalt thy hand lead me. Your right hand hold me. I say surely the darkness will cover me, even the darkness shall be light about me. The darkness hideth not from thee. The night shineth like a day. Darkness and light are both alike to thee."

Isn't that something?

Peter said...this is what Peter said. Peter appealed to this. The Lord said, "Do you love me?"

He said, "You know everything. You know I love you. You know everything."

Is that your God?

Now let me tell you this. Please listen. I am going to get a little stronger on God's knowledge. His knowledge is inseparably connected with his foreknowledge.

"What are you talking about, preacher?"

Well, God doesn't merely know something that will happen. It happens because he ordained it to happen. That's right. 1 Peter 1:2, listen to me. This is the God of the Bible. This is the God of Bible. "We are led," 1 Peter 1:2, "according to the foreknowledge of God, the foreordination of God."

Now, my friends, let me illustrate. I know that fall follows summer and winter follows fall. I know that. I know it is going to happen. Fall is coming. Winter is coming. If God almighty lets this earth survive, fall, the seasons, is not going to stop until Christ comes. I know that. God knows it, too. But God...I don't know it like God knows it. I know it because he said it and he knows it because he willed it.

Do you see what I am saying? That is why he knows it. He knows it because he willed it. Isaiah knew that the substitute would die. He said, "He is wounded for our transgressions." Isaiah knew that. And God knew it because he ordained it. God knew it because he ordained it. And that's what I am saying. The knowledge of God is inseparably connected with his foreknowledge. He knows.

People think they are they are bragging on God when they say, “Well, he knows who is going to be saved and who is going to hell.”

Yes, he surely does because if anybody is saved, he saved them. He ordained their salvation.

Romans eight, listen to it. I will read it to you. It says this in Romans eight. It says, verse 29, “For whom he foreknew he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. And whom he predestinated to be like his Son them he called. Whom he called he justified. Whom he justified he glorified.” That is how he knows it. His knowledge is inseparably related to his foreknowledge.

Now then his holiness. Turn to Psalm 99. I am just going to give you two more, two more, Psalm 99. One of the best books on this and one I use so much in this message was Pink’s *Attributes of God*. I think it is just marvelous, marvelous book.

Look at Psalm 99. “The Lord reigneth, let the people tremble. The Lord reigneth.” You have got a right to tremble. If you are not in accord with his reign you got a bigger right to tremble. If you can’t say, “Let the Lord reign,” you got a right to tremble even more. “He sitteth between the cherubim. Let the earth be moved.” That’s the Shekinah glory. “The Lord is great in Zion. He is high above all the people. Let them praise they great and terrible name for it is holy.” It is holy.

God is called holy in the Scripture more than he is called almighty. Did you know that? Isaiah said the seraphim said, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts.” His holiness is his chief attribute and it is the glory of all the other attributes. The priest wore this inscription. “Holiness to the Lord.” The name of our Lord is his holy name. He is never called in the Scripture...he never calls himself our loving heavenly Father. He calls himself the holy God.

The tabernacle is called the holy place and the holy of holies. He is holy in all of his works. His holiness is manifested in his law. His holiness is manifested more than in any other place at the cross and his holiness demands a full and perfect righteousness of all who would stand in his presence.

Turn to Psalm 24, Psalm 24. Psalm 24 reading verse one through four. “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”

Well, that has got to bring us to the next and final point. We talked about his eternity. We talked about his decree or his will or his counsel. We talked about his foreknowledge and we talked about his holiness. Now what about his grace?

Turn to Genesis six. His grace. And this is a thing I have been wanting to get to because the other is so dreadful with out his grace, the other is so terrible without his grace. There is not a word of comfort in the law. There is not a word of comfort in these things. There is comfort in his grace.

In Genesis six verse five, “And God saw the wickedness of man, the wickedness was great in the earth that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually and it repented the Lord that he made man on the earth. It grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said I will destroy man. I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast and the creeping things and the fowls of the air for it repenteth me that I have made them.”

Now here is the verse, “But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” Now listen to me and I will tell you a little bit about grace and this is so important. And that is the law of first mention. That is the first time grace is mentioned in the Bible. “Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.” And usually when you find something mentioned the first time that is the primary meaning all the way through the Word.

In a world of sin and a world of wickedness and a world of corruption and depravity, there was a man who was a partaker of, a recipient of the free, sovereign grace of God. Now listen to me. God’s grace, God’s grace is a perfection of the divine character which is exercised only towards his elect. Now think with me. God’s grace...Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. God’s grace is a perfection of his divine character that is only exercised only for his elect. You won’t find in the Old Testament or the New Testament the grace of God ever mentioned in connection with mankind in general, only toward his elect. It is grace. It is grace, only toward his elect.

Now grace is distinguished from mercy, for the mercy of God is over all his works. Anything this side of hell is mercy. Anything this side of hell is mercy. Any man tonight that is not in hell is under the mercy. Here is what I am saying. Turn to Psalm 145, Psalm 145. Now I hear this word “grace” loosely used everywhere, everywhere. It only applies to the elect. It only applies to the believer. It only applies to the people of God. It is not used. His grace is never mentioned in connection with mankind in general, on his elect. Now his mercy, that’s different. Mercy.

If a fellow is holding a gun on you and doesn’t shoot you that’s mercy. That’s right. If he just cuts your arm off instead of your head that’s mercy. That’s right. That is mercy.

In Psalm 145 verse eight through 10, listen. “The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He is slow to anger and of great mercy. The Lord is good to all. His tender mercy is over all his works.” But, my friend, grace, grace, grace is the fountain from which flows his love, his love. Grace is the fountain from which flows his salvation. Grace is the fountain from which flows his heart and grace is unmerited, unsought, unearned. It cannot be bought or deserved for if men could earn it or deserve it or buy it, it would cease to be grace. If the recipient has a claim to it, it is not grace.

And the grace of God is always manifested in, by and through the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me show you that.

Turn to John one verse 17. I am wearying you now. I have gone too long, but I want you to see this. His grace is manifested in, by and through Christ. John 1:17. "The law was given through Moses. The law was given through..." Not by Moses. God gave the law through Moses. Does that make sense? It is a bad choice of words there. "But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Came not only through him, but by him. He is the author of it. He is that author of it. He is the fountain of it. He is the originator of it. He is the cause of it. Grace is through Christ.

All right, Romans five. Let's go to there. Romans chapter five and listen to this, Romans chapter five. You know, actually, I talk about Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Those people who died in the flood for 120 years were under mercy. That's right, mercy. They ate and slept and walked about and married and given in marriage and all this until the flood came and swept them away. But Noah was always under the grace of God, the mercy, forgiveness and love of God. "I never knew you," Christ said in Matthew seven. He always knew us. "I have known you from your mother's womb," he said.

Now Romans five verse 15. Let's look, "But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace which is by one man Jesus Christ hath abounded unto me."

Where did this grace come from? Jesus Christ. He is the fountain of it, the author of it, the source of it.

Verse 17. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

Verse 21. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign..." Sovereign grace, it reigns, sovereign grace, "It reigns through righteousness unto eternal life in one place by Jesus Christ our Lord." It reigns over you if you are in Christ. Sovereign grace. I am talking about grace.

There are three principles of grace. Remember this and we will quit. There are three principles of grace and what I am saying is true. Grace is the perfection of the divine character which is exercised towards his elect. It is grace and grace is always three fold. It is eternal. He called us not according to our works, but according to his eternal purpose in grace which he gave to us in Christ.

2 Timothy 1:9. Let me read it. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." It was given us in Christ. His grace is in Christ and it is eternal before the world began.

Secondly, grace is free. “We are justified freely by his grace.”

Thirdly, grace is always sovereign. He said, “I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious. I will be merciful to whom I will. I will be gracious to whom I will.”

“So then it is not of him that willeth, not of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.”

The final conclusion, if a man can come to understand something and know something of the greatness of God, then that man will engage in some form of worship.

Secondly, if a man or woman can come to some conception or understanding of God’s power, greatness, glory and majesty and sovereignty, then he can have some kind of confidence that in that God he can find salvation, that that God is able. This is what Abraham believed, that God was able to do what he said.

He said, “You are going to have a son.” This old man is all but dead. Well, there is only one person that can cause him to have a son. That is a sovereign supreme God. And he believed God was able to do all that he said and it was counted to him for righteousness.

So the only place a man can find salvation is in the hands of a sovereign God who is able to overcome our enemies, our enemies. Satan is more powerful than we are, but he is not more powerful than God. The prince of this world has come and found nothing in me. I cast him out. You can’t cast him out. Christ can.

So salvation, I tell you, salvation, if God almighty has to wait for you to help him save you he may have to wait for you to help him raise you and he may have to wait for him to help you open heaven’s gate, the gates of heaven and take you in and he might have to wait for you to help him take you. And he could if there somebody that can resist him might lose you after it is all said and done.

There is just one place to find redemption and that is from the hand of God who holds everything in his hand and disposes of it as he pleases.

Now, thirdly, if a man can come to some kind of understanding of this character and nature and awesomeness and terribleness of God’s power and ability and to do with his own what he will and everything else, too, if he can have some confidence that what is happening in his life is for his good, then he has some kind of confidence. He could have some kind of understanding that no matter how dark the road or heavy the cloud, rough the road, no matter how short the road, that God worketh all things for his glory and my good. But he has to control everything. If there is a pinpoint somewhere that he doesn’t control you are in trouble, real trouble. For Satan could get it and mess up the whole universe. If there is one satellite out there God doesn’t control Satan could throw this whole thing into confusion just by putting it where it is not supposed to be.

But he reigns over all and his reign is a wise and just and righteous reign. Let's worship God.

Mike, come lead us in a hymn, please.

We are glad to have Hap and Evelyn here tonight from Florida. Glad to have you all here. We are delighted. What number are we going to sing?

Mike: 352

352.

[singing]

Jesus, lover of my soul...